

Meanwhile, the administration wants to cut grants for first responders, and the Coast Guard is struggling with an inadequate force size.

It doesn't make sense. It simply doesn't make sense. The American people know that, which is why they voted the way they did last November. More than 60 percent of Americans are in favor of a phased withdrawal. They don't want to pass this problem off to the next President and another Congress, and they sure don't want another American servicemember to die or lose a limb while elected representatives put their own political comfort over the wishes of their constituents.

Polls continue to show voters strongly oppose the war in Iraq, and that is one of the top issues on which they will be voting. A recent Washington Post/ABC poll found that 65 percent of Americans disapprove of the situation in Iraq and 56 percent disapprove strongly. The same poll also found this is the second most important issue to voters in November, behind the economy and jobs. And a recent Gallup poll showed a majority of Americans, 56 percent, do not believe the surge is working and want a timetable to get out of Iraq. Those Americans need to be heard, and that is what we are trying to do with this important debate.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

PROVIDING FOR THE SAFE REDEPLOYMENT OF UNITED STATES TROOPS FROM IRAQ—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2633, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to consider S. 2633, a bill to provide for the safe redeployment of United States troops from Iraq.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, today we are here to address the issue of the Iraq war, and many are saying: Well, why should we address the Iraq war again? Because, obviously, it is still going on; there is still no direction in terms of political progress; the Shiites, the Sunnis, and the Kurds still have their age-old enmities; the goals of the

Iraqi Government set by this Government for them have not been met; but most of all, I think we are here to debate this issue, at least in my judgment, because we are at a turning point in terms of the debate in Iraq. That turning point—the case against this war—has been building for a long time. As we debate this bill on Iraq, we are at a turning point in the argument against the war. We have always been aware of the cost in life, both American and Iraqi, and we have known how severe that cost is. Despite the good works of our troops, we are continually troubled by the tragic loss of life. The American people are baffled by the lack of political progress and, most of all, the American people are beginning to comprehend the eye-popping figures of what this war is costing our budget and our economy. It is becoming clear to all Americans—Republicans, Democrats, and Independents—that by continuing to spend huge amounts on Iraq, we are prevented from spending on desired goals and needs here at home.

So the turning point is this: The lack of progress, particularly on the political front, continues; the tragic loss of life continues; but the cost of the war and the inability to use those funds to help us here at home, the cost of the war and the inability to use those funds to properly go after the most dangerous nexus of terror, which is a thousand miles to the east—Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran—is now becoming a clinching argument that we must quickly and soon change the course, the direction, of this war in Iraq.

I went to Iraq over New Year's. I spent time with our soldiers. They are wonderful. They are awe-inspiring. The troops are awe-inspiring, from the private I met from Queens, just out of high school, who had enlisted 8 months previously and was in Iraq 3 weeks, to the majors and captains who had served 10 years in the Army or the Marines and had made the military their life's work—they see a greater good than just themselves, and it is wonderful—all the way to the generals. I spent time with General Petraeus at a New Year's Eve dinner. I spent time with General Odierno. They are fine, intelligent, good people.

When I went to Iraq, I assured our soldiers, from the private to the generals, that one good thing that would come out of this war is the esteem that we hold for both the military and our soldiers would be greater when the war finished than when it started—a far different cry than the Vietnam War, which is one of the most disgraceful times in America, when our soldiers were too often vilified for simply serving our country.

But after I left Iraq, I came to this conclusion, Mr. President, and that is that even if we were to follow General Petraeus's game plan—which, of course, involves not just military success in security but winning over the hearts and minds of the people—it

would take a minimum of 5 years and have about a 50 percent chance of success of bringing stability—not democracy but at least stability—to large portions of Iraq. That is not the military's fault, and that is not America's fault. That is because of the age-old enmities within Iraq—the Sunnis, the Shiites, and the Kurds, and then within the groups themselves. It would be very hard to create permanent stability without a permanent and large structure of troops.

Now, I ask you, stability in Iraq—a worthy goal, but is it on your top-five list for America? Is it on any American's top-five list? A few, maybe, not the vast majority. We have many other higher goals that cost the same dollars and need the same attention and energy that is now diverted to Iraq. Our education system is declining, our health care system doesn't cover people, and we are paying \$3.30 for gas because we don't have an energy policy. And even if your goals are just foreign policy, shouldn't we be taking the time and effort that is all now focused on Iraq, as well as the dollars, and spending more focus on the dangerous triangle composed of Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan? Of course. We must ask ourselves: Is it worth spending trillions of dollars needed elsewhere on such an uncertain and unpredictable outcome?

So the debate is changing. The costs of Iraq, the simple costs alone, are weighing too heavily on the American people, the American Government, and on our national purpose. While admirable as a goal, it is hardly the most important goal we have in this changing and dangerous and exciting world in which we live. The cost of the war has become the \$800 billion gorilla in the room. The backbreaking cost of this war to the American families, the Federal budget, and the entire economy is becoming one of the first things, after loss of life, people think about.

A report issued by the Joint Economic Committee, which I chair, estimated that the total costs of the war will double what the administration has spent directly on the war alone—\$1.3 trillion through 2008. And that is a conservative estimate. According to budget figures on Iraq spending for 2000, the Bush administration wants to spend \$430 million a day on Iraq. For 1 day of the war in Iraq, we could enroll an additional 58,000 children in Head Start per year, we could put an additional 88,900 police officers on our streets per year, we could hire another 10,000 Border Patrol agents per year, we could make college more affordable for 163,000 students per year, and we could help nearly 260,000 American families keep their homes per year. In the fiscal year of 2008, we put \$159 billion into Iraq. That doubles our entire domestic transportation spending to fix roads and bridges, and it dwarfs all the funds we provide to the National Institutes of Health to discover cures for diseases such as cancer and diabetes. Iraq

spending is seven times our spending to help young Americans get a college education. The costs are mountainous, and in this changing world, where we have to fight to keep America No. 1, we cannot afford such costs, as I said, despite the great efforts our soldiers are putting into Iraq.

Now, tomorrow morning, Mr. President, we in the Joint Economic Committee—and I see my colleague from Virginia here, and he is on that committee with me—we are going to hold our first congressional hearing of the year, and it will be appropriately devoted to the skyrocketing cost of the Iraq war. That will be the Joint Economic Committee. We are going to have Nobel Prize-winning economist Dr. Joseph Stiglitz talk for a time about his new book, about to be published, and the title speaks for itself: “The \$3 Trillion War.” Dr. Stiglitz got information out of the Government and out of the Pentagon, after much long work, and has new estimates that make our estimates on the Joint Economic Committee seem small—\$3 trillion. That is the title of his book. He is going to talk about the cost of that war. We are going to have national security experts, such as Bob Hormats and Ron Bier, discuss their views on how the out-of-control costs of the war have impacted our economy, our reputation abroad, our military strength and readiness, and the future of our children. Our JEC report estimated \$1.3 trillion, but Dr. Stiglitz—and he has talked to the experts from the Pentagon—has even more massive numbers.

So we desperately need a change of course in Iraq. That is what this amendment calls for. It calls for limiting what our troops will do to force protection, of course, to training the Iraqi army, to fighting al-Qaida and fighting terrorism, but not to be in the middle of a civil war where we continually police the age-old enmities of the various factions in Iraq.

History will look upon this Iraq war in two ways: It will admire the bravery of our soldiers, from the privates to the generals, and it will be amazed at the mistakes made by this administration in starting and continuing this war, far too expensive in loss of life and in dollars.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I ask unanimous consent that after Senator WEBB's speech, Senator GREGG from New Hampshire be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I rise today to strongly oppose any Senate amendment that would require the immediate and arbitrary withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. This amendment is the latest attempt in a year-long effort to constrain the ability of our generals and our brave men and women in uniform to fight this war effectively.

During the past year, the Senate has voted over 40 times on bills to limit the generals' war strategy. Not one has become law or even come close. Since this assembly line of votes started in February 2007, the situation in Iraq has changed considerably and it has changed for the better.

While some Senators were insisting that the war was lost, General Petraeus was in the process of implementing a strategic readjustment that has produced remarkable progress on the battlefield. It has been said on this floor: We need to change the direction. We are changing the direction. We are changing the strategy. We are going in the right direction.

I got back from Iraq 2 days ago. I saw for myself the enormous military gains we have achieved in that country. While in Baghdad, I put on a suit of body armor. I traveled in an MRAP vehicle with our troops through the streets of Baghdad. I was able to go to a police station where we have embedded troops there.

I met with General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, and troops from Reese Air Force Base, Ft. Hood, the Red River Army Depot, and others from the Texas National Guard. Because of the leadership of our commanders and the courage of our service men and women, there is new reason for optimism in Iraq.

The numbers speak for themselves. The murder rate in Baghdad has plunged by 80 percent. Al-Qaida has been routed in every neighborhood. Iraqi forces have formally taken control of security across much of the country. Violence is at the lowest level since 2003. Roadside bomb attacks have receded to a 3-year low. Discovery of weapons caches has more than doubled in the last year. The Iraqi security forces have grown to 440,000 trained and equipped.

At the police station where our Armed Forces are embedded with the Iraqi police, I can see that the Iraqis are taking more responsibility for their security. The Sons of Iraq are an example of that growth and responsibility. The Sons of Iraq, which is now over 90,000 strong, essentially serve as neighborhood watches and manned checkpoints. By providing forces for protecting key infrastructure and information about al-Qaida, the Sons of Iraq has enabled coalition forces to target al-Qaida precisely. This ensures the right people are targeted, and it helps avoid collateral damage, both of which are helping to strengthen confidence in the Iraqi Government.

The transition in responsibility from the U.S. military to Iraqi authority is a major step toward decreasing the presence of the United States in Iraq.

There are other reasons to be hopeful about the future. Our military gains are beginning to contribute to the political gains. Recently the Iraqi Parliament passed three laws that should begin to bring the Sunnis more fully into the governing process and achieve national reconciliation.

First, Parliament passed a law that bolsters the power of the provinces to provide roads and utilities to the residents. Second, it has passed a partial amnesty for political prisoners, 80 percent of whom are Sunnis, in an effort to reduce the conflict and promote peace among different sects. Finally, it approved a \$48 billion national budget that allocates Government revenue, 85 percent of which is from oil, to the provinces, allowing more local control and less dependence on the central government. Altogether the recent military and political news out of Iraq provides further evidence that our strategies must be determined by events in theater, not timetables set by politicians 6,000 miles away.

In the past year so much has changed in Iraq. Yet here on the Senate floor, it seems nothing has changed at all. We are still voting on imprudent bills for premature withdrawal when, in fact, we should be providing a vote of confidence in our troops. The mission of our troops is vital to our security. If we abandon Iraq prematurely, it will become a sanctuary for terrorists to launch attacks against the American people.

There is also a real danger that Iraq could become a satellite of Iran. The Iranian Government has a long record of sponsoring terrorism and arming the insurgents who are killing our brave soldiers in Iraq.

And what about the practical realities of such an irresponsible act of Congress? I am told it would take over a year to retrieve our arms, equipment, and technology. I ask those who are voting for this resolution: Would they leave our arms there for the terrorists to be able to use? What about our advanced technological equipment? What about our surveillance equipment? What is the security threat to the troops left behind if the reduction in strength leaves them without enough protection?

Those who are voting for this resolution, are they concerned about this enemy, this enemy that has no rules of engagement, an enemy that is not in the armed forces of any country, an enemy that executes hostages in front of television screens? Are they concerned that this enemy would be emboldened by an adversary that would abandon its commitment?

Are they concerned that they might attack harder, especially if they could seize our weapons to use against us or make us leave faster so we would leave the weapons and technology?

I ask the supporters of this resolution: What about the oil revenue? What if al-Qaida is able to get access to the millions that it is producing for Iraq? If Iraq collapses and the terrorists take hold with the oil revenue, how far could their heinous crimes go? How far could they spread?

I have heard the arguments about the cost of the war. And the cost is huge. What about the cost of another terrorist attack on the United States of

America? What about the cost in life and treasure of another terrorist attack on this country? Have we forgotten already the cost of 9/11, around 3,000 lives in America, billions to our economy, and the damages to clean up New York City? Are we not thinking of the consequences of this kind of action? This resolution may be an attempt to make a point. This is the United States Senate. I truly believe we should be more responsible. We are the leaders of our country. We should think of the consequences, the worst that could happen, not just the best. If we are able to pick up and leave, even though it would not be the honorable thing for the greatest Nation on the Earth to do, maybe it would be flawless. But we need to think through these consequences and we need to know what is the worst case if we are the leaders of this country.

This resolution is not the act of a thoughtful, informed group of leaders. I urge my colleagues to stop voting on this kind of resolution. I urge the majority leader to stop scheduling the votes that at best serve no legitimate purpose, and at worst demoralize our troops and embolden our enemy.

We have so much that is going for the better in Iraq. Is it as fast as we would like? Of course not. I would love to have our troops walking out right now. I met with hundreds of them this weekend. I know they are committed. But I also have met with the parents and the spouses of those who have lost their lives, who have given the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have said to me: Do not leave with the job undone, because then I will feel that my son or my daughter or my husband has lost his life or her life in vain.

We cannot do that to those who have served so honorably and we cannot walk away from our commitment. We are the Senate. We should be able to take actions that are responsible, that are thoughtful, that will not put our troops in harm's way, that will not leave our equipment to be taken over by the terrorists, that will not leave a country that could turn into a terrorist haven and take revenue and spread their terrorism and their heinous crimes to other places in the world and to our country.

We are here to protect our people. It is our job to act responsibly, and I hope we will do so by rejecting this resolution.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY.) The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following the remarks of the Senator from New Hampshire, the senior Senator from Montana be recognized on our side.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to this bill but in support of the concepts that have motivated it. I think the Senator from Wisconsin fully

understands this. We have discussed this.

I wanted to add my comments with that perspective in mind, because I do not agree with a lot of the comments coming from the other side of the aisle with respect to why this amendment should be defeated.

I cannot support personally an amendment that involves an entrenchment on an appropriations measure. I do not believe the best way for us to address this situation is to cut off funds or to stipulate a series of conditions that might be overinclusive or underinclusive, depending on the situation on the ground in Iraq.

But at the same time, I strongly disagree with the notion that a withdrawal from Iraq at this time is premature. I believe that with the right national leadership, first, we never should have gone into Iraq, but, secondly, that we could have begun a withdrawal with the right national strategy more than 4 years ago.

What we have been engaged in since shortly after the invasion is an occupation, not a war. It has been a military holding action. In the context of history, a military holding action takes place in order to enable the political process and, unfortunately, we have not seen that sort of political leadership from this administration. That is a totally different concept than the one that seems to make it into our debates here.

I have written a lot of books in my life. I made my living before I came to the Senate writing histories and novels. There were many times when I watched this debate that I would think about how this is going to look through the prism of history. How are people going to look back at this period of years in terms of how our national leaders were conducting themselves?

One thought that sticks in my mind is that we tend, when we debate Iraq, to look at this issue almost as if Iraq was an island in the middle of an ocean, disconnected from the rest of the region or even the rest of the world. That is ironically how we ended up in Iraq in the first place, because once we started debating whether we would go into Iraq, we changed from a debate about the dangers of international terrorism and started focusing more and more specifically simply on Saddam Hussein, on the conditions inside Iraq, which obviously was a country that was not even directly threatening us. Most of us sitting on the outside who had years of experience in national security could see that, even as the debate narrowed into Iraq rather than international terrorism.

We are doing it again. We are doing it again when we talk about the success or failure of the surge or where we should go from here with respect to this block or that block or this city or that city or this specific unit of the military. We have fallen into what could be called a double strategic mousetrap. On the one hand, we have

the greatest maneuver forces in the world bogged down, occupying cities in one country that was not even threatening us, while the people we are supposed to be going after, the forces of international terrorism, know no international boundaries, work the seams of international law, and are able to maneuver at will. We are seeing that clearly.

Before I went to Iraq in November, I was getting briefings. The comments and the briefings from the Pentagon were that terrorism activity had been reduced inside Iraq. I mentioned I have been doing this for 40 years, from the time I was a young marine. If I were the forces of international terrorism, I don't think I would be in Anbar Province right now either. I think I would be heading to Afghanistan and Pakistan. That suggestion was basically dismissed in the briefings. Within a few weeks, Benazir Bhutto was assassinated by al-Qaida, and we are seeing heightened activity in Afghanistan such as, less than a week ago a suicide bombing at a dog fight near Kandahar, where more than 100 people were killed by al-Qaida. That is what a strategic mousetrap is.

When you are going up against people who know what they are doing and who are very dedicated to it, you get yourself bogged down in one spot where you can't get out, and then they have the maneuverability.

The second strategic mousetrap we can clearly see involves how we are addressing the rest of the world. In terms of our military posture, we have burned out our military. We are not focusing properly on the strategic issues facing us globally, particularly the situation that we face with an ever-evolving China, and the need to regrow our Navy. And our national economy is going into a tailspin.

When I look at this region, I see a region in chaos. We can talk about whether you can go to the market in Baghdad. Wherever the U.S. military has been sent, it has done its job historically. I had the honor of serving in Vietnam. On the 20th anniversary of the fall of Vietnam, the Communist government admitted that it lost 1.4 million soldiers dead on the battlefield; this illusive guerilla force, 1.4 million soldiers dead. We did our job. That doesn't address the larger issues in which the military performs its job and doesn't address that issue in Iraq today either.

We are very proud of what our military has done. I am proud of my son. He served as an enlisted Infantry marine in Ramadi in some of the worst fighting. But this region is in turmoil from Lebanon to Pakistan. Anyone who has been involved in these issues intimately understands that. People are betting against us, not in terms of our military operations but as a leading nation.

When we were preparing to go into Iraq, it cost \$24 for a barrel of oil. Yesterday the market closed above \$101 for

a barrel of oil. When we were getting ready to go into Iraq, as I recall, gold was less than \$300 an ounce. It is up almost at \$1,000 an ounce today. The dollar is in jeopardy. Our budgets are in deficits. Our infrastructure is diminishing to the point that we have to worry about whether we can be a leading nation in terms of technology, the sorts of things that have always made us great—roads, bridges. All of these issues do tie together. Even when we start arguing about how this surge has affected the conditions inside Iraq, if we are going to be honest, if we are going to look at the situation as it really is rather than simply as one political side or another wants to make it, we have a lot going on in Iraq, a lot of moving pieces that don't exactly add up to the possibility of great success in the near term.

I have heard people from General Petraeus to people on the other side talk about how the surge is responsible for the period of decreased activity in Al Anbar, around Ramadi. That began before the surge was announced. There were two reasons for that. One, al-Qaida overplayed its hand there. The Sunnis made a deal with our side. The Sunni insurgency made a deal with our side and they hated al-Qaida more than they hate us. We don't know how long this is going to last. They don't like an occupying force.

The second is, al-Qaida is pretty smart. They are fluid. They are mobile while we are tied down. If you go up to the Kurdish areas, which have been sort of the bulwark of our strength in terms of relations, we see that the Turkish parliament has approved military activity by their military inside Iraq. They have begun an incursion more than a week ago where they have been operating inside northern Iraq. Imagine what the other side would be saying right now if the Iranians were conducting military activities inside Iraq. We have a region that has been filled with chaos from refugees, external refugees, internal refugees, by some accounts more than 30 percent of pre-Iraq war population refugees, either outside the country, heavily burdening Syria—by the way, more than a million refugees in Syria—but also inside. Eighty percent of those internal refugees in Iraq right now are women and children.

We need to be able to address this honestly, and we need to be able to agree that the way out of this isn't simply through the performance of our military. It is that we need national leadership that will put a formula together so that we can remove our military. There is no true strategy if you cannot articulate an end point. When you look at it, one of the things I keep going back to is what General Dwight Eisenhower said in the dark days of the Korean war when we were stuck in a stalemate, when he was thinking about running for President and then running for President. One might compare this with comments we hear from the present administration. He said:

[The Korean War] was never inevitable, it was never inescapable. . . . When the enemy struck, on that June day of 1950, what did America do? It did what it always has done in all its times of peril. It appealed to the heroism of its youth. . . . The answer to that appeal has been what any American knew it would be. It has been sheer valor on all the Korean mountainsides that, each day, bear fresh scars of new graves. Now—in this anxious autumn—from these heroic men there comes back an answering appeal. It is no whine, no whimpering plea. It is a question that addresses itself to simple reason. It asks: Where do we go from here? When comes the end? Is there an end? These questions touch all of us. They demand truthful answers. Neither glib promises nor glib excuses will serve. They would be no better than the glib prophecies that brought us to this pass. . . . The first task of a new Administration will be to review and re-examine every course of action open to us with one goal in view: To bring the Korean War to an early and honorable end.

I suggest that is the prospect that faces all of us. On what do we need to be focusing? I agree, by the way, that this is not something that is going to get us very far in the next couple of days, other than to air our concerns. We need to be getting a GI bill for the people who have been serving since 9/11. I would invite people from the other side of the aisle to support this. We keep calling these people the next greatest generation. They deserve a GI bill at the same level of those who served during World War II when they got all tuition paid for, books bought for them, and a monthly stipend. I introduced that bill my first day as a Senator last year. We have more than 30 cosponsors. Let's come together. Let's make that happen. Let's give these people the first-class future they deserve.

We need to focus on the agreement that is now being negotiated between this administration and the Maliki government, where they are saying they will consult with the Congress. This type of long-term agreement, going into security issues, is, in fact, a treaty, no matter what we call it. It is a treaty that they are negotiating, and we in the Senate should advise and consent on that. We need to focus on the wartime contracting commission that just became law where we can root out fraud, waste, and abuse, the billions of dollars of no-bid and instant contracts that were put into Iraq from 2003 forward. In other words, let's create the environment where we can get the right kind of diplomatic solution and remove our combat troops from Iraq. Let's focus on the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

BUDGET ISSUES

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I recognize that much of the debate the past 2 days has been about our status in Iraq and what we should be doing in Iraq relative to the two proposals offered by Senator FEINGOLD. Clearly, the issue of how we fight terrorism and how we confront the threat of Islamic fun-

damentalism and its avowed purpose of destroying Western culture and specifically targeting America and Americans is probably the overriding issue we must address. But right behind that issue is the question of what type of nation are we going to pass on to our children relative to the fiscal strength of our Nation. We confront an issue there which is as significant for the prosperity of our children as the issue of terrorism is relative to the security of our country.

We are faced with a situation where, as a result of the pending retirement of the baby boom generation, three specific programs—Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security—will grow at such exponential rates that they will essentially bankrupt our Nation if we don't do something.

This chart reflects those three programs, the red line here, and their rate of growth. This black line reflects what has historically been the amount of money the Federal Government has spent. The Federal Government has historically spent about 20 percent of the gross national product of America. These three programs alone, by the year 2025, 2028—it varies depending on who you talk to—will cost 20 percent of the gross national product. Trying to put this in perspective, by the year 2030, when the baby boom generation is fully retired and is receiving its benefits, the cost of supporting that generation through Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security will be so high that if you put it in the context of what we traditionally spend in this Government, we will have no money available to do anything else as a government. We will have no money for national defense, no money for education, no money for laying out roads, no money for environmental protection.

It does not stop there, because the costs incurred continue to go up. They continue to go up at such a rate that by about the year 2035, we will essentially have a situation where approximately 28 percent or more of the gross national product would have to be spent to support these three programs.

Then, of course, you have the additional obligations of Government. What does that lead to? Well, if that were allowed to occur, it would lead to a situation where our children and our children's children would be paying so much in taxes to support the costs of maintaining these three programs for my generation—the baby boom generation—that our children would essentially have no opportunity to send their children to college, to buy their first home, to live the prosperous and fulfilling lifestyle we have today in America because all those discretionary dollars would be absorbed through taxes to support these programs.

To put it in a different context, with numbers which are almost incomprehensible but which need to be pointed out, we are told by the Comptroller

General's Office that the unfunded liability of Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security is \$66 trillion. That means after you figure in all the money you pay for Social Security taxes, and all the money you pay for health insurance taxes, the HI tax, the Medicare taxes—after you figure in all that money, there is still a responsibility, an obligation on the books that is not paid for. That amounts to \$66 trillion—trillion with a “T.”

Now, \$1 trillion is almost an incomprehensible term, so to try to make it a little more comprehensible, if you took all the money paid in taxes since our country was formed, since we began, that is \$42 trillion. That is all the money that has been paid in taxes. We have a liability on the books that exceeds all the money paid in taxes throughout the history of our Nation.

To put it in another context, if you take all the assets of America—everyone's home, everybody's car, all your stocks, all your small businesses—and you add them up—everybody's net worth—that amounts to \$59 trillion.

So we have a debt on the books that exceeds our net worth as a nation. That is called bankruptcy, and that is what we are headed toward unless we address this issue.

This week, the administration, under a direction from the Congress, sent up a proposal to try to address the biggest part of this problem, which is the cost of Medicare.

When we passed the Part D drug benefit for seniors, there was language put in that bill—remember that bill was passed with a strong bipartisan vote—that said if Medicare started to have its financial resources—its support, the dollars that paid for Medicare—come out of the general fund at a rate that exceeded 45 percent of the overall cost of Medicare, then the trustees—if that was projected to occur for 2 years over a 7-year period—the trustees were directed to direct the President to make a proposal to bring the cost of Medicare back under control. It is called a trigger. That is what it is referred to.

Why did we put that in or why was that language put in? It was put in because Medicare was always conceived to be an insurance program, even though it gets a fair amount of support out of the general fund, the general fund being general taxes. Everybody pays their taxes: income taxes, corporate taxes. Those taxes are used to operate the Government generally: to pay the defense budget, to pay the education budget, to pay the environmental agency—to pay the different activities the Government undertakes. That is the general fund. Those funds were not supposed to be the funds that supported health insurance for seniors.

Medicare was supposed to be an insurance program, as is Social Security, where the funds are collected from people, working under the HI tax, which you pay, which is withheld. Those funds are what are supposed to support Medicare.

If you start taking money out of the general fund, it is generally acknowledged—not through too many “generals,” but it is generally acknowledged you are basically creating an income transfer event, a redistribution of wealth event, where you are taking money from basically the general operation of the Government and you are putting it into the support of people on Medicare who are retired. That was never the goal of Medicare.

So recognizing that, but also recognizing that a brandnew benefit was being put on the books that was fairly significant—the drug benefit—it was decided to put in place this law that said we want to keep Medicare primarily as an insurance event rather than an event which basically is unsupported, a cost that is basically supported by the general taxpayers of America who need to support the regular operations of the Government: defense, education, things such as that. So this trigger was put in.

Well, we have now had the trustees evaluate the Medicare fund, and they have concluded that in the 7-year window, under present projected spending patterns, Medicare's support—the dollars necessary to support Medicare—will require a call on the general fund that will exceed 45 percent of the general expenditures of Medicare.

That is a serious issue, and it goes to the larger serious issue of this unfunded liability question, because Medicare makes up \$34 trillion of the unfunded liability. Do you remember the prior chart, where I pointed out there is \$66 trillion of unfunded liability? Well, of that \$66 trillion, the majority of it is the obligations under Medicare. So it is Medicare spending that is driving the problem which we confront, which is pointed out in this chart, which is that we are headed toward a government that our children cannot afford and which will bankrupt our children unless we do something.

So this proposal that was put into the Part D drug law, in which the trustees direct the President essentially to propose changes in Medicare spending, which will allow us to make the Medicare Program affordable and continue it to be an insurance program, is a step, and a fairly significant step, if followed correctly, down the road toward reducing this outyear threat of a fiscal meltdown.

It is critical we heed the law we passed and, specifically, the statement and the execution of the statement that has been made by the Medicare trustees that the trigger must be exercised. And the administration has the obligation to set up a way to accomplish these savings.

Now, under the law, the administration sends up its proposal, which it has done, which proposal is required to bring the Medicare system back into balance, so it is not taking more than 45 percent of the general fund. That bill is then required to be introduced by the majority and the minority on the

House side and Senate side. The chairman of the Finance Committee has introduced a bill, I believe last night, with myself as ranking member of the Budget Committee as the primary sponsor on our side. That does not mean it is agreed to. It means that under the law it has to be introduced.

I happen to think what the administration has sent up makes sense. But what cannot be denied is that this problem is very real. I was extremely surprised, for example, to hear Senator KENNEDY say: The proposal sent up by the administration is dead on arrival, and the administration has trumped up a phony crisis in Medicare.

You tell me how \$66 trillion of unfunded liability is a phony crisis in Medicare. The Medicare trustees, who have a fiduciary responsibility, the highest standard we have under law to protect the solvency of the Medicare trust fund, tell us the law is being violated and that changes must occur. You tell me that is a phony crisis.

What is unfortunate is this “bury the head in the sand” approach that is being taken by the majority party, as reflected by Senator KENNEDY, in facing this issue. This issue must be faced. We need to act.

Now, what has the administration suggested we do? They have suggested three basics in order to bring this in line.

First—and I cannot understand why anybody opposes this proposal—they have suggested that under Part D, which is, again, the drug benefit, people pay a portion of the premium of the cost of the drug benefit. But high-income people pay a very small portion of the cost of the drug benefit compared to what they can afford to pay. They pay about 25 percent of the cost of the premium of the Part D drug benefit.

Somebody such as Warren Buffett, who qualifies for the Part D benefit—I am not picking on him specifically, but he is a national figure of some note, and he obviously has a fair amount of assets—his premium under Part D, in order to purchase drugs, is being subsidized by John and Mary Jones, who work in a restaurant in Nashua, NH, or by Bill and Susan Parker, who work in a gas station in Epping, NH. Their taxes are actually subsidizing Warren Buffett's drug insurance, his ability to buy drugs, which is totally wrong.

What the administration has suggested is that people, individuals who have incomes over \$80,000, and joint taxpayers who have incomes over \$160,000, or approximately that amount—fairly wealthy people by American standards—should pay more than 25 percent of the cost of their drug premium. I think they have suggested they pay 50 percent or maybe 60 percent but not the entire premium. They are still going to be subsidized by John and Mary Jones who are probably making a lot less than \$160,000 working at a restaurant in Nashua, NH.

That is their first proposal.

The second proposal they put forward is that we should have an IT proposal, something that basically means using technology to communicate more effectively the costs of health care, to create a more integrated system where you could get more effective information on what health care costs in order to drive better purchasing practices. We all know that is going to significantly improve the delivery of Medicare and all health care, if we do this. It is something that should be done and, therefore, is appropriate.

The third thing they have suggested is that we limit basically frivolous lawsuits that are driving up the cost of health care and actually driving some doctors in the area of OB/GYN—baby doctors—out of the practice, that we essentially adopt what is known as the California Plan for medical liability insurance—again, a very rational approach.

None of the ideas the administration has put forward are radical. None of them are even targeted in a way that would significantly affect very many beneficiaries. In fact, as to the entire proposal they put on the table, 94 percent of Medicare beneficiaries would not be affected by any of these proposals—94 percent. Only 6 percent; that is, the wealthiest 6 percent, those people with incomes over \$80,000 individually or \$160,000 jointly. Those folks having to pay a portion of their Part D premium would be impacted, and they should be impacted.

So that proposal has been put forward.

Three ideas—all of them reasonable, all of them initiatives which we should be able to accomplish, and which would, if undertaken, actually reduce this insolvency in Medicare dramatically. I think the estimates are that over the 75-year life, you might take as much as \$8 billion out of this insolvency number if you did these proposals which the administration is suggesting. That is a huge number over 75 years. It would actually be a major step in the right direction. But, more importantly, it would respond to what the law says we should do. So I certainly hope we are not going to sit on our hands.

I see the chairman of the Finance Committee is in the Chamber. He says he is going to act. I hope his colleagues will follow him, because that is the type of leadership we need.

Now, the administration's three proposals aren't the beginning and the end of the process. Anything can be on the table to try to get this resolved. But the fact is, we need to resolve it. The trigger has been pulled. We are over the 45 percent or we are projected to be going over the 45 percent. We need to act not only because of that but because of, more importantly, this out-year problem. We have no right as policymakers to pass our generation's problem on to our children, which is exactly what we are going to do if we don't act. Our generation is the one

that is creating the issue because of the demands we are going to put on the system because we are such a large generation. We are in the position of making Government change, and we should address this. We should take that action, and I certainly hope we can over the next few weeks.

Mr. President, I appreciate the courtesy, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Montana is recognized.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from New Hampshire for his comments and for pointing out the budget expenditures and exposure down the road. The only point I wish to make about his presentation is that the increase in entitlements is not so much because of Social Security—that is not the big problem for the next 15 or 20 years. Rather, it is the increases in Medicare and Medicaid that are going to be very expensive for us to accommodate. The real question is, What is the solution? We know what the problem is. The question is, What is the solution?

It is interesting that Peter Orszag of the Congressional Budget Office printed a report just about a month ago saying that the rise in the number of baby boomers is part of the problem, but that is not the big problem. The main reason that Medicare is going up at such a rapid rate and that Medicaid is also going up at a significant rate is because health care costs in this country are rising at such a rapid rate. So I think it is important to address not just the symptoms; that is, the wacky Medicare, but it is much more important to look at the direct causes or what is causing these increases.

Our country today spends about \$2 trillion on health care—about \$2 trillion. About half of that is in the public sector and half in the private sector. The projections of the Congressional Budget Office, a nonpartisan organization, are that private health care costs are going to increase very significantly over the next 20 years and Medicaid costs are going to also increase significantly but, for Medicare, much more. The rate of increase in the private sector will be a little less because the private sector tends to control costs a little better. For Medicaid, the rate of growth will be not quite as high as Medicare growth because States pay for part of the Medicaid costs and States are going to get a little more control of their State budgets.

The real problem is the increase in health care costs. We in America spend twice as much per capita on health care costs than the next most expensive country, and I don't know that we are twice as healthy as the next most expensive country. We have great health care in America. Our technology

is the envy of the world. Our drugs are the envy of the world. But we have a system which basically is unnecessarily expensive and is going to cause us to be anticompetitive in future years.

I was in Bangalore, India, not long ago. I brought about 15 or 20 Montanans. It was a trade trip partly to China and also to India. We went to the John F. Welch Technology Center, which is one of General Electric's three technology centers in the world. Kind of "gee whiz" stuff, kind of interesting. During the tour, I walked up to the manager. He was the only non-Indian there. He is a German, Argentine his background.

I walked up to him, and I said: Why are you here in India? Why are you here, right here? Why is your research facility here?

He said: Greatest talent pool.

I said: Well, what country has the next greatest talent pool?

China, he said.

I asked: Where are we as Americans?

He said: You are kind of down here.

What does it take, I asked, to get us up there?

He looked at me without skipping a beat, and he looked me straight in the eye, and he said: Education and health care. He says: You have to educate your people a lot better than you are. Second, you have a health care system that is making you anticompetitive, you Americans.

It is true, our health care costs are so much higher than the costs of companies in other countries. About 18 percent of our total health care costs are administrative; in other countries, it is about 4 or 5 percent. There are a lot of ways to get at this problem. The real question is, What is a solution? How do we get health care costs more under control?

I daresay that whoever is elected President is going to be forced to and should be and will have an opportunity to make a major health care proposal to our country. We on the Finance Committee are starting to hold a lot of hearings on health care. There are a lot of provocative questions. We need to not be flat-footed, and we need to work in tandem with whoever is elected President so we can begin to address two main points. One is coverage. We are the only industrialized country in the world where people don't have health insurance that is not universal coverage. We need to have that. Second is to address costs. We need to figure out how we can get a handle on the excessive increase of health care costs in our country.

I commend my friend from New Hampshire for raising the problem, but the real question is, What is the solution? The President's letter is not even a glancing blow to solutions; it kind of touches on some possible solutions. It is critical for us to address the underlying questions. What are the underlying causes of increased health care costs? I don't have the time here to go

into all of what I think we need to look at and will be focusing on in the Finance Committee, but that is a major challenge we face as a country, and it is a great opportunity for all of us to dig deep and help to solve this problem so Americans can be proud of the country we have, with universal coverage, and also get a handle on excessive costs.

(The remarks of Mr. BAUCUS pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 462 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I would like to use about 10 minutes or so, if I may, to discuss what I think is an important topic for the country. The Senate has allowed itself to discuss progress in Iraq—or the lack thereof, depending on how you view these things—and to discuss a measure proposed by my good friend, Senator RUSS FEINGOLD, that would require us to withdraw troops, I think within a 120-day period, leaving troops behind in a very limited role and basically telling the world and our enemies we are leaving Iraq, and the people left behind would have a very limited function in terms of what they could do—a complete change in strategy. It would be saying to the Petraeus strategy: It failed, it didn't work, and we are going to replace the Petraeus strategy with the Feingold strategy.

Now, as much as I admire Senator FEINGOLD—and that is a great deal, to be honest with my colleagues, because he takes his job very seriously, as do the rest of us, but he is willing to do and say things very few people will do or say, and I think that makes the country a better place. Sometimes I disagree with him. This is an occasion where I find the Feingold strategy replacing the Petraeus strategy would be a disaster for the country, the region, and our national security interests, and I say that with all due respect.

Now, one of the central theses of Senator FEINGOLD and others who support this measure is that Iraq is a side venture, not part of the war on terror, and our presence there is making us less secure, not more, and that we have taken our eye off the ball. I would argue that the enemy doesn't see it that way. It is my belief and contention, and has been for a very long time, that Iraq has become the central battlefield in the war on terror. That happened when al-Qaida decided to go into Iraq after the fall of Baghdad and undermine this attempt at moderation in Iraq, tried to drive us out, and a year ago this time, I was worried that they were going to succeed.

For about 3, 3½ years, we got it wrong in Iraq. We didn't have enough troops. We had a training model that was not delivering quality in numbers in terms of the Iraqi Army. The insurgency was thriving. There was a lawless period. You had the Abu Ghraib episode that allowed al-Qaida to go on

a recruiting drive all throughout the Mideast.

Thank God we changed strategy this time last year. I wish to compliment the President, and all of those—particularly Senator MCCAIN—who spoke loudly and clearly that we needed to change strategy. It wasn't a debate about changing in Iraq. Everybody wanted a change. Some wanted to just leave and worry about the consequences later. Senator MCCAIN and others said: No, we need not only to stay, we need to put more troops on the ground and come up with a way to suppress this insurgency because without security there will never be reconciliation. I think the results are in, and they are overwhelming, and they exceed all expectations I had in terms of success for the surge.

But to the central point: If you believe, as I do, that this is one battle, the central battle in regard to a global struggle, not an isolated event, it is a battle you can't afford to lose. If Iraq fell apart, broke into three parts, became a chaotic state, the national security implications for our Nation are enormous.

They start with the following: Al-Qaida would be on every street corner in the Mideast saying that we beat America and ran them out of Iraq. What would that do in terms of a chilling effect on moderation in the region? Who would be the next group of moderates to stand up and say: Come help me fight against extremism, America, after our behavior of leaving Iraq, and those who helped us to try to make Iraq a better place, a new place? They would surely get killed. If we left Iraq, withdrew, gave the battle space in Anbar to al-Qaida totally, they would have killed everybody who tried to help us, and it would have taken decades to get over the consequences of that mistake. You cannot leave people behind to be slaughtered by terrorists and expect to ever win this war.

Here is what bin Laden said in 2002 about Iraq:

I now address my speech to the whole of the Islamic Nation. Listen and understand. The most important and serious issue today for the whole world is the Third World War. It is raging in the land of the two rivers. The world's millstone and pillar is Baghdad, the capital of the caliphate.

Bin Laden did not get the memo that Iraq is not about a global struggle. Clearly, from his point of view, it is the defining battle in terms of his goals and ambition for the al-Qaida movement. The reason al-Qaida came into Iraq was to make sure we would lose, that moderation would fail. Their worst nightmare is for a mother to have a say about her children, and if we can pull this off in Iraq, where the different groups—the Sunnis, the Shias, and the Kurds—can live together under the rule of law, have a central government and local governments that work together and allow people to raise their children without fear and prosper together and a woman has a

say about her children, that is an absolute nightmare for al-Qaida. They see the outcome in Iraq as very important to their agenda. I hope we are smart enough to see the outcome in Iraq in terms of our own national security because I have said a thousand times, you cannot kill the terrorists and win this war. Killing terrorists is a part of this war. The war is an ideological struggle. The high ground in this war is the moral high ground. That is why Abu Ghraib hurt so badly. That is why we have to, at every turn, showcase our values as being different from our enemy's. When we capture an al-Qaida operative, it becomes about us. The rules we employ in the capture of an al-Qaida member or any other terrorist showcases who we are, and we cannot use as an excuse they do terrible things and they don't believe the same things we do; therefore, we are going to throw the rules out and be like them. That is the one way to lose this war.

I am proud of my Nation standing by moderation in Iraq. I am sorry to the American people and all those who have gone to Iraq many times that we got it wrong so long. But wars are that way. The model we had after the fall of Baghdad allowed the enemy to grow and become stronger, and it made it difficult to reconcile the country, which is in our national interest.

A year ago about this time, a new general took over with a new strategy: 30,000 troops were interjected into the battle space. But it is not about 30,000 troops. This general understood how to win. We took the troops out from behind the walls, and they started living with the Iraqi Army and police forces in neighborhoods. We took each neighborhood block by block, securing people in a way where they felt comfortable enough to talk to us about their future, about their hopes, and about their dreams, and over time they helped us.

This infusion of military might into Anbar, where al-Qaida was roaming freely, allowed people who tasted the al-Qaida life to say: I don't want to live this way. The Sunni awakening was an effort by a very brave sheik, who is now dead, to break loose from the al-Qaida agenda and come to the American and coalition forces and say: I would like to align with you because this is not the way I want to raise my kids, these are not the hopes and dreams I have for my people in Anbar.

They killed him, and if you go to Anbar, there are photos of this guy everywhere. They killed him, but they did not kill his idea. As a matter of fact, at his funeral and thereafter, the people of Anbar have upheld this sheik as a model of the future, as a hero. Al-Qaida overplayed their hand. They tried to intimidate everybody around them. They are trying to intimidate us: Do it my way or die. Do it my way or watch your children die in front of you. Do it my way or we will burn your children right in front of you. Live my way religiously or lose everything you have, including your life.

You know what, the good news from the surge, beyond all other news, is that a Muslim population had a chance to experience this al-Qaida life and said no. That, to me, is the single most important event that has happened in the last year, that Muslims would turn on al-Qaida and fight them and say: You are wrong; this is not what the Koran teaches, this is not the way we are going to live our lives. And they have done something about it.

The sheik has given his life. Many others in Anbar have given their lives to make sure al-Qaida does not win. Al-Qaida lost in Anbar because we had enough military presence, along with a new attitude of the people who live there, to beat these guys. They are not 10 feet tall. They are thugs, and history is full of people such as this who have had ideas that certain groups are not worthy of living. The Nazis had their view of who could live and who would die, and it was based on racial stereotyping, prejudice. There have been other episodes in history where religious bigotry determined who lived or died.

The way you beat these people is not for the good people to come home and leave the battlefield to the enemy; it is for the good people to rally around the values that make this place worth living and fight these people. The way you win this war is you align yourself with people willing to take on the terrorists and extremists and fight back against al-Qaida, and that is what General Petraeus did. When the awakening occurred in Anbar, we put tanks around every leader we could find and told them: We are not leaving; we are here with you.

The Sons of Iraq is an organization that sprung up from the population, where almost 80,000 people now belong to this organization where they patrol the streets at night to make sure al-Qaida does not come back. Anbar is a completely different place. Al-Qaida has been diminished and defeated in Anbar, and they are moving to other places in Iraq. They are not defeated yet, but they are certainly on the run.

For America not to appreciate what has happened here, for this Congress not to celebrate what has happened in the last year I think is sad. We should be using this 30 hours to say to General Petraeus, thank you; to Ambassador Crocker, thank you; to all those under your command, thank you for having the courage and the wisdom to turn this around, and we acknowledge that you are turning it around. We know you have a long way to go yet, but thank God you have turned the corner, and we have turned the corner. And the corner I wanted to see turned was when the people of Iraq would stand up to the extremists and fight back with our help.

GEN David Petraeus said in May of 2007:

Iraq is, in fact, the central front in al Qaeda's global campaign.

GEN Michael Hayden, Director of the CIA, said in January 2007:

I strongly believe [that U.S. failure in Iraq] would lead to al Qaeda with what it is they said is their goal there, which is the foundations of the caliphate, and in operational terms for us, a safe haven from which to plan and conduct attacks against the West.

It is clear to me Iraq is a central battlefield. It is clear to me about 3 years we were losing. It is abundantly clear to me now that we are winning. The Iraqi people have stepped to the plate and produced results that are astonishing, and it has come from a new strategy that has produced better security.

The monthly attack levels have been decreased by 60 percent since June of 2007. How did that happen? This new strategy of General Petraeus of getting military power out into neighborhoods, staying on the insurgency, giving them no rest, emboldening the citizens to fight back has paid great dividends. It is still a dangerous place but what a dramatic change: a 75-percent drop in civilian deaths since the beginning of 2006. From January to December, sectarian attacks and deaths have decreased over 90 percent in the Baghdad security district. How did that happen? We had a plan to secure the capital city by getting out from behind walls, going into neighborhoods, providing firepower and assistance, and the Iraqi people have done their part.

Coalition forces cleared approximately 6,956 weapon caches in 2007, over twice what we found in 2006. How? People are telling us where the weapons are because they want a new country. They see us as a solution to their problems, not the problem, and they are coming forward telling us things they did not tell us last year because they have sensed momentum, they feel as if they are safer and they don't want to go back to the old ways and they are helping us help them.

Iraqi security forces in the last year are responsible for security in 10 of the 18 Iraqi provinces. One of the biggest stories in this year has been the improvement of the Iraqi security forces, particularly the army. The national police have been a real problem. Even they are beginning to turn around. There are 100,000 new members of the Iraqi security forces, many of them being able to operate independently from us, for a total of a half a million people in uniform.

The Iraqi people have stepped to the plate. They are helping themselves in a way I admire. The casualty rate among Iraqis is three times that of our American and coalition forces. Every American death we mourn, but the reenlistment rates among American soldiers, military members who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, is through the roof. What do they see that we don't? Why do they go back so many times? I know what I hear. I hear overwhelmingly: Senator GRAHAM, I want to get this right so my kids don't come. I hear from the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines: If we win here, it makes us safer at home. It is hard, it is tough,

it is difficult, and they keep going back because they know the outcome in Iraq affects us at home. And God bless them for doing it.

One brief statement: Well done. You have exceeded every expectation I have had. You have done a marvelous job. You performed your mission beyond any measure. You are involved in the most successful counterinsurgency in military history. All those who have taken part will go down in military history. We should be celebrating as a nation what I think is one of the biggest military achievements in the history of the world. But we cannot quite do that. I don't know why.

Al-Qaida is diminished but not defeated, but they are on their way to being defeated.

The big debate has been, what will make the Iraqi politicians get their act together. If we threaten to leave them there, they will start doing business in a better way. I have always felt that if you threaten to leave Iraq, every moderate will be chilled and every extremist will be emboldened. If you want to bring back life to a diminished enemy, let them read some headline somewhere in the world: "America begins to withdraw," as this Feingold resolution would suggest or as Senators OBAMA and CLINTON would have suggested. You would literally breathe life into a defeated, diminished enemy. It would be music to their ears. For every moderate who has sacrificed, lost family members as judges, as lawyers, as policemen, as army members, it would be heartbreaking.

I cannot believe people do not understand the consequences to the world if the American Congress said: We are going to leave Iraq in a set period of time. I cannot believe we do not understand how that would resonate throughout the world. It would be music to an enemy that is really on the run. It would rip the heart out of those who brought this about. And you want political progress in Iraq to go forward? Tell al-Qaida we are going to leave and see what kind of progress we get in Iraq.

The politicians in Baghdad have been frustrating to deal with, sort of similar to here at home. But you know what. I am here to say something I did not think I would say last year: Well done. The deBaathification law has passed. What does that mean? It means the Shias and the Kurds have welcomed people back from the Sunni Baathist Party that ran the Government under Saddam to their old jobs, made them eligible for their old government jobs, and they are saying to their Sunni Baathist neighbors: Let's build a new Iraq; let's not look backward.

Can you imagine how hard, I say to Senator LIEBERMAN, that must have been, to have grown up in Iraq, and the people who ran the Government under Saddam Hussein made their life miserable and you have a chance to be on top; you can fire them all and make them miserable, and then suddenly,

after a lot of dying, you realize: Wait a minute, we have to go forward, not backward. The deBaathification law is a huge step toward reconciliation.

A \$48 billion budget was passed.

Politicians in the Congress can relate to one thing: money. We are always fighting to get our fair share for our State and our districts. The \$48 billion budget that was passed has money allocated to every region of Iraq, and reconstruction can now go forward. And the ministries delivering the money are better than they have ever been but with a long way to go.

The fact that Sunnis, Shias, and Kurds would share the wealth of the country with each other seems to me to suggest that they view Iraq as a country. And to give money to someone who may have been involved in trying to kill your family just months ago is very difficult to do. But they have overcome, I think in great measure, the biggest impediment that every country eventually has to overcome—and that is forgiveness. There is a long way to go in Iraq, but we are a lot closer to getting there than we were last year. And the only way we are going to lose is for Washington to screw it up.

The provincial powers law, it passed the Parliament and went to the Council of Presidents. It will allow local elections in every province beginning in October. And I predict if that law becomes reality, Sunnis will vote in large numbers, and they boycotted in 2005.

The central government run by the Shias came to the conclusion that we are going to decentralize power; we are going to let each province elect their local leaders, instead of trying to micromanage everything from Baghdad. You know what that means? Democracy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MENENDEZ). The Senator is advised by the Chair that there is a preceding order to recess at 12:30.

Mr. GRAHAM. To be continued. I yield.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, with the indulgence of the Chair, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business on another subject for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRAHAM. May I have 2 minutes to finish my thoughts?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRAHAM. The provincial election law was vetoed by Abdul Mahdi, a Shia Vice President, over the issue of whether governors elected to the province can be replaced by a majority vote in the Parliament. That is going to their Supreme Court. It is a unique and novel issue, and, to me, it gives great hope because they are resorting to the law rather than the gun. It is constitutional democracy playing out in front of us. It is something we should celebrate.

Amnesty: There are thousands of people in the jails of Iraq now, mostly

Sunnis, who have been tied to the insurgency. The Parliament passed a law that will allow a community of Sunnis, Shias, and Kurds to go through the files of the people in jail and say to some of those who have taken up arms against the Government: Go home, my brother, and let us build a new Iraq. That is a stunning development.

Now, how did all this happen? Iraq is war weary. People are tired of living in fear. We have given them better security; we put al-Qaida on the run, which has been trying to stir up trouble ever since Baghdad failed; and people have a sense of economic and political hope they have never had before. Oil revenues are up, have doubled. Oil production is up 50 percent. The economy is moving forward at a very fast pace. All of this is due, in my opinion, to resolve, to the surge, to the bravery of the Iraqi people and the American military and coalition forces who brought it about.

To my friends and colleagues in Congress: We are going to win in Iraq. Finally, we have a model that will lead us to a stable and functioning government rejecting terrorism and aligning with us in the war on terror. And the only way we will lose now is for Washington to lose its will and undercut this model. I hope we understand what this debate is about. It is about winning and losing a battle that we can't afford to lose.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Again, I thank the Presiding Officer for staying in the chair for a period of 10 minutes.

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, this morning we learned of the death of William F. Buckley, Jr. I wanted to come to the floor and reminisce a bit about Bill Buckley, whom I have been privileged to know for more than 40 years, and to pay tribute to a devoted and patriotic American, a remarkably creative and eloquent man of letters, a person with an extraordinary sense of humor and a kind of spirit to him that infused anyone around him.

He was a person who believed in the power of ideas and loved the exchange of ideas. He lived a remarkable life, with great effect for this country that he loved, and a tremendous impact on people who read his novels, his books, and his columns in the National Review, or watched him for so many years on that wonderfully thoughtful, cerebral, provocative TV program "Firing Line," which was open not just to conservatives such as Bill Buckley, but to people with all shades of opinion who were willing to engage him—Bill Buckley, WFB—on the field of ideas. A remarkable man.

I was privileged to get to know him more than 40 years ago when I became the editor—at Yale, of course, editor

wasn't a good enough title. I was called the chairman of the board of the Yale Daily News. And there was a gentleman at the Yale Daily News named Francis Donahue—Tackie Donahue—and he had been there forever as the permanent business manager. I remember the day after I was chosen, he told me he had informed Bill Buckley of this in one of his regular memos back and forth to Buckley. I was fascinated by this and began a communication with Bill Buckley at that time, and he took a wonderfully warm, kind of brotherly interest in those who were at the Yale Daily News, as he had been in the early 1950s. He invited me and a couple of our friends from the news to come to his house in Stamford, CT, for a dinner or two, which were stimulating, thrilling evenings.

Our friendship went on, and I will come back to that, but Buckley's life is an extraordinary life. He came out of Yale, became very well known for a book he wrote about what he thought was the hostile environment at Yale toward people of faith, toward people who were conservative, et cetera, et cetera, "God and Man at Yale." He went from that to starting the National Review in the mid-1950s. I believe it was 1955. I remember reading once that he had said in the founding issue that the publication would derive from original ideas of the moral order.

Bill Buckley was a person who studied history, studied literature, learned from it, and also was infused with a deep and profound commitment to his Roman Catholic faith. That, I think, was the origin of the moral order which he gave expression to in all that he did in writing for the National Review and speaking out and conducting himself as a provocative, loving American. He believed that ideas mattered, and they did.

The National Review, in some sense, gave birth to the modern American conservative movement. But it wasn't always a Republican movement. His was a matter of ideals and ideas and philosophy—conservatism. Incidentally, he rejected extremism. To his everlasting credit, he took on the extremists of the John Birch Society, which wasn't popular for him to do at the time he did it.

I am just remembering words of Buckley. He said he was a conservative ideologically, not always favorable to Republican candidates. I remember reading about an editorial he wrote in the National Review endorsing General Eisenhower for President. While everyone else was echoing the slogan "We Like Ike," Buckley's editorial said, "We Prefer Ike." So it was a relative judgment that he made.

He was thrilled, of course, much more by the candidacy of a former Member of this body, a distinguished Member, Senator Barry Goldwater, and most of all by the candidacy of President Reagan. At one point, in the mid-1960s, he ran for mayor of New York. And again as a kind of joyous, thought-